



BOARD OF VISITORS

THE VIRGINIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND
P.O. BOX 2069
STAUNTON, VA 24402-2069

Senator Emmett W. Hanger, Jr.
Board Chairman

Board of Visitors
December 13, 2012
VSDB Main Hall Boardroom

Senator Hanger called the meeting to order.

Members present: Senator Hanger, Senator Favola, Delegate Wilt, Donna Gateley, Rachel Bavister, Virgil Cook, Jane McNeil

Members absent: Delegate Bell, Diane Sandidge, John Pleasants, Alice Frick

Special Guests: Savanna Funkhouser for Delegate Bell, Carrie Smith Nee Assistant Attorney General Education Section

A quorum is present.

Reading and approval of September 27, 2012 meeting minutes:

The Board discussed the spelling of buses/busses and the appropriate way to record references to resolutions. The word Resolution will be capitalized in the minutes. Rachel Bavister MOVED to accept minutes with noted corrections. Motion was SECONDED. Motion carried by voice vote.

New Item:

The school would like to provide an activity for the Board members to allow them to see the school in action. The Chair would entertain a motion to adjourn and participate in the activity. Rachel Bavister MOVED to adjourn the meeting to allow the members of the Board to participate in the school activity. Motion was SECONDED. Motion carried by voice vote. The Board members were assigned to students and accompanied the student to class. The Board will return to boardroom by 11:00 a.m. The Board will then have a working lunch provided by VSDB.

The Board meeting reconvened at 11:00 a.m., Board members confirmed that no more than two members were together during the school activity. Senator Hanger introduced Carrie Smith Nee from the Attorney General's Office, she is representing Cameron O'Brion.

School Reports:

Budget

Janice Rankin reported that VSDB is 5% over budget at the beginning of December. The Governor called for a proposed 4% budget cut from all agencies. VSDB submitted a proposal that would cut approximately \$350,000 across programs. The school now has a smaller budget

appropriated for the operation of the school than before the consolidation. Students who are applying for admission to the school have higher needs than in the past. The DeafBlind students require extensive staffing. VSDB is asking for financial assistance from the LEA of the DeafBlind students, but financial assistance is not mandated by law. VSDB also is required to submit budget cuts for both k-12 and agency. The main budget consumption of the school is personnel and utilities. The insurance for FY12 was paid from FY13 budget because there was not enough money in the FY12 budget to cover the insurance. This will happen again in FY13.

Part of the FY 12 proposed budget cut included the rental income from empty buildings on the VSDB campus from the consolidation project, these buildings are not rented. The school has had some interest in the buildings, but has not been able to find a client. Rental income will come directly to VSDB, but if the property is sold that money will not be returned to the VSDB budget.

No additional questions.

Human Resources

Nate McLamb reported on current open positions and recruitment.

VSDB is authorized 181.5 full time (faculty and classified) positions, 169 are filled with 12.5 positions open. Three positions are in active recruitment: Assistant Principal in the Deaf Department, PE Teacher for the Deaf, and a Special Education Teacher. Nine positions are not being filled due to budget constraints.

VSDB is authorized 63 wage positions, 57 are filled. Active recruitment is underway to fill the vacant positions. Filling the wage positions will save the school overtime.

Conflict of Interest forms are due. Mr. McLamb will contact the non-representative Board members and is available to help complete the forms.

Residential

Mary Murray reported on the residential program. The nature of current students required more supervision than in years past. In the "old days" a ratio of 20 students to two staff was acceptable, now, by license requirement, that ratio is eight to one and often the dorms need a lower ratio due to the special needs of the students. The dorm staff generate much overtime to cover absent staff and sports programs.

The playground in the courtyard should be finished this month. The students have been one year without a playground and are very excited about the new one. A music room is being constructed in the basement of the Stuart Building for the blind students. The students will be playing at Shenandoah Pizza on December 18th. VSDB will look into ways to share the new playground with the community.

All elementary students, deaf and blind, are housed in Watts Hall this year, boys are on the basement floor and girls are on the top floor. The boy's floor is working great, most are hard of hearing or low vision. They are able to interact, learn about each other's disabilities, and help

each other. The girl's floor is having more difficulty; the students are totally deaf or totally blind and are having a harder time interacting with each other. Staff are looking at moving the blind girls back into Houser-Tyler Hall with other blind students.

The students are often seen interacting with each other on campus. For example, deaf students helping blind students find the correct path and there is a VI student on the JV basketball team. Lots of positive interaction is being observed. When the students are taught at a young age to understand the disabilities of the other students, they are more willing to accept them.

VSDB is hosting two tournaments this school year: The Boys' Basketball Mason Dixon Tournament January 24-26 and the Blind Department Goalball Tournament in March. Everyone is invited to come.

In response to a question about security the Board was briefed on security practice. Security personnel are on campus 24/7 making rounds checking on buildings and grounds. As part of the construction, cameras have been installed with a viewing station in the security office. VSDB staff is trained to stop strangers and offer help. The school is having a problem with skate boarders damaging the new half wall that was installed. AYSO, a local soccer association, is renting the lower soccer fields. They are responsible for their participants, but it does increase the amount of weekend traffic on campus.

School

Keith VanFossen reported that the elementary principal intern has started a newsletter to send home to parents.

The middle and high school have started a new program, Kid Witness News (KWN), this year with photography teacher Faithlyn Robinson. KWN is a national program where students produce news programs about school and local issues using the latest digital equipment on loan through Panasonic. The programs are presented to the school and two will be entered in the national competition. The programs are on the VSDB web page.

The Blind Department had their holiday concert last week; it was well attended by both school staff and the local community.

Today is VSDB's Homecoming. Activities are planned for the afternoon and evening with the crowning of the homecoming court and basketball games in the gym. Board members are welcome to attend.

Science teachers Mr. Wood and Ms. Quinn took several students to a weekend program with VCU. The students received hands-on science experience. Both deaf and blind students participated and the group will attend another session in the spring.

Enrollment Update and Diversity Report

Cyndy Ward reported on current enrollment activity. From July 2012 through December 2012 the elementary school has had five students to enroll in the Deaf Department, five students to enroll in the Blind Department, and one application in progress for the preschool. One student

had significant support needs and will be transferring to the public school soon. The middle school had one student to enroll in the Deaf Department and one student to enroll in the Blind Department. The high school had two students to enroll in the Deaf Department with one in the application process, two students to enroll in the Blind Department, and one student with significant support needs applied, but was not accepted at this time.

The Diversity Committee has two goals at this time: Provide education and support around areas of need and promote additional interactions among all students on campus. Some of the possibilities include participating in a VSDB community service project involving all students, sports collaborations (a good example is the cross country team where both blind and deaf students are on the team and deaf students are serving as guide runners for some of the blind students), and a student government with representatives from both departments.

At this time there is no program in place to link VSDB alumni with students. There is a program in the dorm where deaf alumni are providing programs for the students on subjects related to the school and some of the blind alumni have come in as a special visitor to the classroom, but these are not part of a program to link students with adult mentors.

Horticulture and CROPS Program

Nick Swanson reported on the horticulture program at VSDB known as CROPS (Cooperation, Respect, Opportunity, Perseverance, Skills). This program involves students with different activities of the food/plant growing process. Fifteen to twenty students are participating in the program on a weekly basis. The program is being implemented both through classroom study and after school activities. Students are learning how to plan and build raised beds, plant and care for the plants and harvest the plants. Nutrition and science are part of the CROPS curriculum. Working in conjunction with the Allegheny Mountain School (AMS), a fellow will arrive on campus in January and work for one year in support of the horticulture program. She will work 40 hours a week and provide support over the summer to maintain the plants.

Update on current business:

VSDB Foundation

Nancy Armstrong reported that the VSDB Foundation met on December 4 to hear presentations from the two finalists, Sun Trust and Capital One, in the search for a fund manager. The Foundation choose Capital One. The process will start to transfer the funds from management under Davenport to management under Capital One after the new year. The next focus of the Foundation will be fundraising. The Foundation Board would like to have a joint meeting soon to report to the Board on activities and plans.

Construction and Rental

Nancy Armstrong reported that the consolidation construction is coming to a close. The last project is the playground in the courtyard. A covered walkway that will allow access for fire trucks to the courtyard is under construction. The music room for the blind students will also be completed soon. The project has money available and several ideas are being considered: The renovation of the student health offices on the first floor of Bradford Hall, paving and stripping

throughout campus, and the installation of an irrigation system for the extensive new landscaping from the consolidation project.

The footprint of Darden Hall is in the process of becoming a parking lot. The lot will not be paved in time for the Mason Dixon Tournament, but the contractor will have it available for parking.

ESCO Project

Marvin Mahler reported he has received the report from Siemens and he is reviewing the details and working out the contracts. The Byrd Hall sprinkler system will need to be removed from the ESCO project to allow better control. The total cost of the project will be paid back in 11 years. Mr. Mahler is hopeful to have the contract in place before the winter break. A separate budget item will be needed for the Byrd Hall sprinklers.

New Business:

Dental Program

Every student at VSDB is required to have a yearly physical and dental exam; many students miss one or more weeks of school due to overdue exams or appointments. Students cannot return to school until the overdue item is taken care of. Some parents are unable to bring their child to school after a mid week appointment so the student misses the whole week of school. Amy Huffer, Director of Student Health, reported that a member of the Student Health staff, Mary Beth Moore, found a program that will help save missed school days for VSDB students due to overdue dental exams. The Smile Program from Mobile Dentists will provide dental exams on the VSDB campus for students. Information will be sent home to the parents. Mobile Dentists will bill all insurance companies, including Medicaid, and will send bills directly to the parents for the portion that is not covered by insurance. The first session will be March 11 & 12, 2013. If it goes well, the Mobile Dentist will return twice a year in September and March.

Student Health wrote a proposal for a grant to buy additional Automated External Defibrillators (AED) for the campus that are accessible to the deaf staff. Currently there is not an AED on campus that is accessible to the deaf staff. The AEDs have audio directions, but not a screen to read directions. VSDB did not receive the grant, but were directed to put in for a gift. The gift amount of \$2500 will cover one AED with a readable screen (\$1300) and the rest of the money will be used to update the scales and height equipment in Student Health.

Last year Student Health sponsored a Biggest Loser challenge. The response was excellent with a total of 215 lbs lost by staff. About half of the 50 initial participants completed the program. There has been interest in having the program again this year. The cost is \$5 to join and \$1 for each pound gained or for a missed weigh-in.

Student Health will provide 24 hour coverage for the Mason Dixon Tournament.

VSDB has children that are medically fragile. For students with a trach, an agency nurse is assigned to care for the student in an emergency. Policies are in place to make sure the nurse is only for the medical needs of the student and not asked to do classroom tasks.

TEMP Program

Nancy Armstrong asked the Chair to introduce one new item to the agenda. The Board agreed to the new item.

VSDB would like to implement a new program in the 2013-2014 school year to supplement the IEP process for students not enrolled in VSDB. The TEMP (The Extra Mile Program) would allow students from public schools to spend one week at VSDB to work on IEP goals. The students would stay in the dorms and attend separate classes designed around IEP goals in agreement with the Local Education Agency (LEA) and have the opportunity to socialize with other students and adults with similar disabilities. This program could help set up VSDB as a resource to LEAs. Nancy Armstrong received permission from Steve Staples, Executive Director of the Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS) to address the Region Superintendents about VSDB. Dr. Armstrong met with Region VI on December 12 to give information about the TEMP program and other services provided by VSDB. (The Foundation is covering travel expenses for Dr. Armstrong to reach out to organizations and LEAs.)

Senator Favola MOVED to authorize and endorse the TEMP program. Motion was SECONDED. Motion carried by voice vote.

Public comment:

J H Cline, (VSDB graduate and retired VSDB teacher) asked why the Governor is giving 4.9 million to LEAs for VI teacher aids and assistants, why don't they fully fund VSDB? Senator Hanger acknowledged Mr. Cline's concern and remarked that this is one of many proposals the Governor has made and that it still needed to be voted on by the General Assembly.

Byron Heath, President of the Deaf Alumni Association (VSDAA), told the Board they are doing a great job. VSDAA is looking for ways to support the Board. Some of the deaf alumni have sent ideas including a shelter for picnics. They will support homecoming and the Mason Dixon Tournament.

Next Meeting:

Next meeting will be March 21, 2013. Date will be reviewed.

This meeting will be a work session. School reports will be sent by e-mail one week prior to the meeting, but presentations will not be given during the meeting.

Possible agenda items

- Presentations on technology needs for deaf and blind students.
- Investing in buildings and equipment
- Mainstreaming vs. residential program

- Distance learning
- Representative from Gallaudet University/ how to form a better relationship
- Virtual Credits
- Strategic plan to make VSDB the best school in the nation
- VSDB Foundation will be invited to attend and give report.
- Possible facilitator to run meeting.

No further business. Meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.